

172. Healthy Sexuality Part 1: Using Sexuality For Good



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Sara Brewer

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You are listening to the *Overcome Pornography for Good* podcast episode 172, Healthy Sexuality Part 1: Using Sexuality For Good.

Welcome to the *Overcome Pornography For Good* podcast where we take a research-based, trauma informed and results focused approach to quitting porn. This approach has been revolutionary and changed thousands and thousands of lives. I'm your host, Sara Brewer.

Hey everyone, welcome to today's podcast episode. So here's what we're going to do for the next couple of episodes. I have decided I want to share a lot of a new milestone that I'm putting into the program. So we've just added some new milestones, one specifically on shame and one specifically on healthy sexuality is what we're working through. And so some of this healthy sexuality, I want to share it with all my podcast listeners too.

The reason I want to share this with you is, number one, you deserve education around this. I'm going to get into a lot of all of that and what that means throughout this series. Number 2, I want to help you reduce shame. And so there are three ways that we really work on healing all of that shame inside of us. We're doing offline work, which is like body regulation stuff. We're doing online work, which is rewriting that story that perpetuates that shame. And then we're doing education. The education piece is really big here in reducing shame.

The shame milestone goes into those first two points in depth. The body regulation work and the rewriting of your stories, this is going into that third part, the education piece.

And number three, the reason I'm sharing this with you is because it will help you make empowered decisions. Key concepts here are that you are the authority of your own life. You get to decide how to use this information. My goal is to help you give up some black and white thinking around sexuality, to help you feel empowered and again, just this education piece.

And so what we're going to cover in this series, we're going to cover using sexuality for good, what that looks like, it's just kind of a great baseline

172. Healthy Sexuality Part 1: Using Sexuality For Good

before we get into some of the juicier topics, which is porn panic and myths about porn. We're going to talk about porn literacy, fantasies and desires, intrusive thoughts. We're going to talk about masturbation. Yes, we're going to address that big elephant in the room and I'm just thrilled and excited about it.

And we're going to talk about shame-free commitment with all of this. So please enjoy this series. And this first video we're going to cover using sexuality for good, and then I'm going to start in on some of the porn panic and myths about porn stuff, give you a little snippet there. And then next week we'll just continue.

Again, if you want, you know, we're doing coaching on this all the time. We have worksheets and help with this. If you want to come in and join the program, you're always welcome to come and work with us, sarabrewer.com/workwithme.

Before we hop into the topics around porn panic, myths about porn, fantasy versus desire, porn literacy, masturbation, all these juicier topics, I want to talk about using sexuality for good. So this is overarching as you're going throughout this whole milestone keeping in mind this concept, using sexuality for good. We're using it for good.

And a key concept here that you really need to understand is that sexuality is neutral and it is not bad. Sexual shame and purity culture messages teach us that sexuality is bad. It teaches us that it is just inherently sinful. And I really want us to question that, okay? Instead I want us to think of sexuality like we would any other emotion, or sexual feelings like any other emotions.

So like anger. Anger tends to get a bad rep, right? And sometimes we hear messages like don't be angry, anger is – Just the overall message that anger is bad. But it's not inherently bad, it's neutral and it can actually be really life-giving. If we think of anger as fire, which is a common analogy/metaphor for anger, fire can tear down a forest and a whole mountainside. And it's really clear to us how fire can be a dangerous thing.

172. Healthy Sexuality Part 1: Using Sexuality For Good

Now, fire is also necessary for protection, warmth and the evolution of humans, right? Imagine our world if there was no fire or if we didn't let fire exist. We would not have a lot of the things that we have today. We need fire, again, protection, warmth, and the evolution of humans.

And so one thing that I teach my kids is, because we all have some fire energy in us, I can feel it in their little bodies. We're using our fire to warm people and to help people. We're not using our fire to hurt people.

My daughter the other day, she's so funny. She's so cute. She was so mad and started yelling and screaming. And I said, oh, remember, remember, we're going to use our fire to help people, not to hurt people. And she said, I want to use my fire to burn people. She's cute and learning. She's just learning.

But so instead of just squashing anger and just getting rid of it, we want to use it to help people, right? And so I bring this up because this business and what I do would not be making the impact it does if I just squashed all of my anger. Some of you can feel I get passionate and I get into like defender, like defender energy when it comes to some of this stuff and how people have been treated who have viewed pornography. It really makes me angry.

Now I can use that anger to go and scream and yell and take it out on other people. Or I can use that anger and fuel it towards creating warmth and protection and support. And that's really what we've done here. And so like anger, it's not inherently bad. Anger is not inherently bad, we can use it in good ways.

So it's the same with sexuality. Sexuality is not inherently bad. We can use it in really good ways, right? How is sexuality needed? It's needed, again, for the evolution of humans. We're going to talk about a lot of this as we keep going, but just keeping that in mind, okay?

I've got this analogy that I use sometimes that I want to share. I want you to imagine that you grow up in a village and in this village, everyone always

172. Healthy Sexuality Part 1: Using Sexuality For Good

talks about the tiger that comes along when you're 13 years old, 12 or 13 years old.

They say, listen, someday you're going to have this tiger come around and you're really going to have to keep it in check because this person's tiger, it ruined their family, it killed their family. It tore down villagers houses. It's just, it's a mess. You've really got to, you know, when this tiger comes we've got to really be on our toes. We've got to be a little bit nervous. We've got to make sure that we control it.

And you're like, oh, I don't really know if I want a tiger to come anymore. And they're like, sorry, it's just what happens to everyone. Okay, so you turn 12, 13, and this tiger appears. And immediately you're filled with fear. Oh no. Crap, this is that thing that everyone was telling me about. I've got to go take care of it. If I don't take care of it, it's just going to ruin everything.

Okay, we're going to go put this tiger and we're going to build a fence around it. It's just going to stay in this fenced off area and I'm just going to try to keep it contained. Okay, so this tiger, it stays in this fenced off area. Pretty soon after a while, it's feeling pretty neglected. And it's not getting food. It's not getting water. And it just becomes angry and it starts tearing down this fence.

And you're like, oh crap, I've really got to take care of this tiger because if I don't, it's going to ruin everything. It's going to hurt people. It's going to hurt my village. It's going to hurt me. Okay, I'm going to go build this fence. I'm going to build it higher and higher, stronger and stronger.

But the tiger, it just keeps tearing it down. And so every single day you have to go and fix this fence. And every single night you're up at night, worried and scared about how this tiger is going to, if it gets out it's going to hurt a lot of people. So you're building, building, it's just exhausting, but it's what you've got to do. It's your only option.

One day someone comes walking down the road from another village and they've just got their tiger kind of hanging out with them. It's like their pet.

172. Healthy Sexuality Part 1: Using Sexuality For Good

It's walking with them. It's protecting them from anyone outside of them that might be trying to get them. It seems like it's this person's buddy and you're just in awe. You're also a little bit terrified.

You find out that this tiger is safe. This person is safe. And so you approach them and you say, hey, how did you get your tiger to not tear down everything and not hurt people? How can I have this? And they tell you, I had to train it and I got hurt a little bit. I got nicked and bit a little bit, but I just, I trained it and I loved it. And eventually it became my friend instead of something that I was very afraid of and that was hurting other people.

You're like, oh, okay, can you teach me how to do that? And they say yeah. And so you do that. You learn how to befriend this tiger. And the first couple of times you're in there trying to help it and love it, you get bit. You have to take breaks.

It takes a little bit of time, especially because this tiger has been neglected and hurt and wounded and it doesn't trust you. But eventually you gain trust with it, it becomes your friend. And it's not something that you are up all night worrying about. Your life is a thousand times better.

Okay. So I want to use this analogy thinking of it as in terms of sexuality, right? How many of us, and especially if you grew up in really deep purity culture messaging, this is going to relate to you specifically. But a lot of us were taught, oh yeah, this is just something we've got to be scared of and we've got to keep a hold on. It's just something that happens. Not much you can do about it, but you just got to be strong and keep building those fences. It's just part of being a human, being the fallen man, something kind of scary.

What if that wasn't true? What if that wasn't true, but instead it's something that we could use for good and could be an integral part of us? A part of us that is a companion, a helper, something that is not something to be afraid of and scared of our whole lives.

172. Healthy Sexuality Part 1: Using Sexuality For Good

Now, this analogy has some flaws. It's not perfect. One of those flaws is that sexuality isn't inherently dangerous and it's how we've treated it that makes it dangerous. And it's how we think about it that makes it dangerous. And it's the conditioning that we have around it that makes it dangerous.

And a couple other takeaways from this analogy, if you have suppressed and you have been afraid of it and you do not have a good relationship with your sexuality, if it's a very fearful, angry, you hate it kind of relationship you have with your sexuality, it might take a while to heal that.

Just like it did in this analogy where years and years of neglecting this tiger, of keeping it in a cage, of getting angry and hitting it and screaming at it to go away and to not be there and just wishing it wasn't even there, right? That's going to take some time to build that relationship.

And you might go in and you might get bit a few times. And you might go in and things might not go how you expect it to go the first couple of times. And that's okay. And that's okay. And it's okay if it takes some time for you to build this relationship with your sexuality.

Now, using sexuality for good, what that can look like is it looks like using it for connection. Using it to connect with your person, to connect with your partner, right? Really deep, beautiful connections that you can't get without it.

It also looks like passion. Passion is using sexuality for good and experiencing passion with your person, with your people, however it is you decide to use that in a good way for you. That's another way we can use it for good. Love and lust for your person, that is using sexuality for good. That creates really deep, intimate, beautiful relationships. And that is very good.

You can use sexuality for good by connecting to your body and your inherent sexual nature, right? So here's what I mean by this. Using sexuality for good means it's there. It exists. There's nothing we can do about it. We're not going to make this go away. And with that, we can use

172. Healthy Sexuality Part 1: Using Sexuality For Good

that to connect to our body, to connect to our inherent sexual nature, or we can use it to reject our body and reject our inherent sexual nature.

Now, connecting and acceptance is going to be much better than rejection for your relationship with yourself and your relationship with your human body. Using sexuality for good also looks like just loving that part of you. Instead of hating it, loving that part of you.

Now, using sexuality for good is not suppression. There's two very different sides of a continuum here, right? So there's the suppression on this side and there's the uninhibited action on this side. So uninhibited actions, always acting on sexuality, doing whatever it says all of the time is not using it for good. And suppression, pushing it down, pushing it away, hating it, wishing it wasn't there, suppression. Suppression is also not using it for good.

And so we have to be careful. Sometimes we think, oh, if I'm using sexuality for good, that means that I'm suppressing it as much as possible or I'm suppressing it more often than not.

So really understanding there's a spectrum here, there's a continuum here, and we don't want to have uninhibited sexual action, that is not using it for good. But also suppression is not using it for good, kind of coming back to this idea of using sexuality for good as a part of integrating, loving, connecting with our bodies and just like loving that part of us. Loving who we are as sexual human beings.

Using sexuality for good is not suppression, like we just talked about. It is not manipulation and coercion. So that might look pouting if your partner isn't giving you sex. You know getting grumpy and grumbling along if you're not getting sex. Saying, if you don't, I'll find someone else. Using Bible verses to manipulate your person into having sex with you, like this is your duty, you must submit to me, things like that. Manipulation and coercion, not using sexuality for good.

Duty, you're just having sex out of duty. That is not necessarily using it for good. Using sexuality for good is not sexualizing young girls in the media.

172. Healthy Sexuality Part 1: Using Sexuality For Good

We should not be doing that. There's a lot of really sad horror stories of girls who grew up in Hollywood or who were really sexualized by the media.

And not even just girls, like boys too. I think of Justin Bieber and you hear his interviews that he had as a young kid and they're pretty shocking. Interviewers asking them questions they shouldn't be asking them and them being overly sexualized and touched in inappropriate ways on camera. It's really wrong. So that is not using sexuality for good.

Policing other people's sexuality is not using sexuality for good. And so what that looks like is being very judgmental about how people use their sexuality. And I'm not talking about harmful, hurting people. Yeah, there needs to be accountability there. But stuff where it's not hurting other people, policing how they do it, that's not using sexuality for good.

Only seeing people as their sexuality. Sexualizing people when you meet them and that's the only way that you see them is as a sexual person, that's not using it for good. Hurting others, of course, hurting others, violence, harm, not for good.

Also using sexuality for good is not denying that you have sexual urges, right? Oh, nope, I don't have sexual urges or I'm going to push these sexual urges away and I hate these sexual urges. That's also not using it for good. Or using it as a reason to hate yourself and hate your body, that's not using it for good either.

And so do you see how there are these two opposite sides where we don't want total suppression and hating and so much shame, that's not using sexuality for good. And this other side of uninhibited or harmful sexual activity or actions, the sexualizing girls in the media, the manipulation, coercion, the duty, the policing other people, right? That's not good either. And so I want you just to keep this in mind as we go through this milestone, this idea, this concept of using sexuality for good.

Now, help here. We have so much help for you. This is really where the value in the program is. And so yes, use and enjoy all of these milestones, all of this content. There's so much work you can do for yourself here and

172. Healthy Sexuality Part 1: Using Sexuality For Good

you have lifetime access to all the coaching, remember. And so come to a weekly coaching call. We can talk you through this anytime. We can talk through questions. Whatever is coming up for you around this, we can help you. We can work through this.

We have specialty calls. We have specialty calls with sex coaches every single month, where if there's something specific you want to take to a sex coach, you can do that. And we also have relationship calls where we can address a lot of this.

Okay, I think this is a great foundation for us to move into our next topic. Let's talk about porn panic and myths about pornography. So one big value of Overcome Pornography for Good is that we want to be research-based. And throughout the years, this has led me down a rabbit hole of research.

About six to nine months ago, it's actually probably more like a year ago, I hired a contractor to do some non-biased research for us. Her name's Meg Jankovich. She's a great researcher and she also owns the Shame-free Chastity Instagram account. And what she did is she got us the most up-to-date research on treatment modalities with the best results for people wanting to quit porn. We want to make sure that we're up to date on the best modalities.

She gave us honest research about the effects of porn. And I'm going to tell you right now, it's not what you think. We found that a lot of anti-porn research is not accurate and is actually pretty agenda-driven. And so keeping in mind that this is all – I went into this, I'm like, it's really important to me that we just look at what's out there and we do it in a non-biased way. And let's like, go look and let's really study all the research around this because you hear so many different things.

And so we went into it and it's been this huge project and this huge thing that's happened over the last year. And so that's what we're going to share here with you now is our findings, okay?

You can find the whole project and all of the citations on our website, centerforovercomingpornography.com/researchpage. If you just go to the

172. Healthy Sexuality Part 1: Using Sexuality For Good

homepage, it's up on the top bar too, you'll see it. And then also all of the citations will be here at the bottom in this milestone. It'll be as a download, so you can go and reference those studies if you would like to.

Now, the research that we found with the treatment research here is that compulsive viewing of pornography is about escapism, escaping uncomfortable emotions. That's it. Not addiction. Not sexual deviance. Not some hidden inner desires. It is simply a release of dopamine that can be habit forming. And mindfulness and acceptance of thoughts, this thought work that we work on, are shown to decrease problematic pornography use the most.

Now it was really fun to see this show up in all of the research because that's what we do. And there's a reason that it works so well and a reason this program has worked for so many people. And so it was fun to see that part really fitting with what we do.

Other research findings is that trying to fight off sexual thoughts can actually increase them. This is why treatment that includes acceptance, mindfulness, and not judgment is shown to be more effective, right? I mean, you know this, we teach this with the beach ball example. Trying to fight off sexual thoughts can actually increase them. When you hold a beach ball underwater, what does it do? It wants to pop up. That's what happens. That's why we teach mindfulness.

Acceptance of self and pornography viewing may lessen porn viewing more effectively than efforts at abstinence. Now, do you hear that? Let me repeat that. Acceptance of self and of pornography viewing may lessen porn viewing more effectively than efforts at abstinence.

And so what we're really trying to help you do is accept, love, and have a nonjudgmental view of the pornography use. And once we're in that place, right, when we get rid of a lot of the shame and the fear and the panic around it, you have a lot more control and you can make better viewing choices.

172. Healthy Sexuality Part 1: Using Sexuality For Good

And so that's also why we really focus on, hey, let's not focus on days without porn anymore. We're not going to focus on abstinence anymore. We're going to focus on all of these other tools that we're teaching you that kind of help the root of what's going on.

We're going to help. We're going to heal the shame. We're going to teach buffering. We're going to teach emotional regulation. We're going to teach mindfulness. Focus on these skills, don't focus on abstinence. That's why you'll see a lot of people in the program make a lot quicker progress once we're doing that.

Another research finding is that men with low self-esteem may struggle more with problematic porn viewing. So what that means is debunking old masculine traditions, and I know some of you don't love this term, but what is it? It's like toxic masculinity messages, right? Some of those messages that men get. Men don't cry. Men shouldn't be this way. A real man doesn't do this. That's not helpful. And so getting rid of that is actually really helpful when it comes to quitting porn.

So you can go see that whole project there at that website page, see all the sources, see more about those research findings. And now I want to get into myths about porn because this is going to be really applicable and helpful for you. But first let's talk about some history. So the source from this history where I was introduced to this idea of moral panics was Dr. Marty Klein.

So moral panics are crusades against artificial threats that are inflated by the media and public. I'll give some examples here of what that means, but perceived threats without data, reason and good research.

So here's some examples. In the 1950s, the moral panic was comic books, right? Everyone was afraid of comic books. And amateur research concluded that comic books led to antisocial behavior among young readers. We know that's not true, but that's what people were saying that the research set back then.

172. Healthy Sexuality Part 1: Using Sexuality For Good

There were public burnings of comic books, censorship, bans on words like zombies, vampires. There were certain things that had to happen, like police had to be portrayed positively and divorce had to be portrayed negatively. There was a lot going on around comic books, a lot of panic, fear, policing of comic books. And now in the 2020s, we know comic books do not lead to antisocial behavior. We know that a lot of that just isn't true.

There was the marijuana scare of the 1960s. In the 1980s it was Dungeons and Dragons. Big scare around Dungeons and Dragons, a big moral panic around those. Some evangelical Christians even claimed that it led to mental illness and suicide, which we know today is not the case. But it was a moral panic at the time.

There was the homosexual agenda where gay people are labeled as mentally ill, as predators, blamed for AIDS, that they prey on children. There's gay conversion therapy. That's a really rough part of our history that was led by a moral panic. And now that we know more, in the 2020s, we know that's not true. We know that's very harmful and that creates a lot of trauma for people.

There's the vaccination scare, it causes autism. You guys remember that and how much that's been refuted over and over and over again, and it still kind of makes its way into different spaces. Now, every person gets to choose what they put into their children's bodies, but the scare that vaccines cause autism has been refuted over and over again. And that's another example of a potential moral panic.

Rock and roll, right? Remember the moral panic around rock and roll? And in the 2000s, what seems to be happening is a porn panic. Pornography seems to be another moral panic where pornography is really demonized, marginalizes and lies about its content, marginalizes consumers, speculates wildly about its effects.

And a lot of this, again, I want to make sure that I cite Marty Klein where I learned this idea that really stood out to me, right? But this pornography, it really stands in for everything that is scary and confusing about this digital

172. Healthy Sexuality Part 1: Using Sexuality For Good

age. And so, it's really easy for people to blame porn for everything that's scary. But what you'll see in a minute is that really, it's not the porn that we're looking at that's causing a lot of problems, it's a lot of stuff underneath the surface.

The porn panic here is creating the impression that only people who use it are selfish, sick, desperate, lost, obsessed and using it criminally. Now, a lot of you who are here have been victims of these narratives around people who use porn. And this might be why our program and Center for Overcoming Pornography really stood out to you, is because we're telling you, no, this isn't you. You're not a bad person.

If you haven't been able to quit, it's not because you're not good enough, not strong enough. You've been taught the wrong information. No, people who use it are not selfish, sick, desperate, lost, obsessed or using it criminally. Yeah, some people maybe, but it's not every single porn user, right? It's not you. If you're in the program, that is not you, okay?

So moral panics lead to biased and inaccurate research claims. And we're going to get into depth in this in a minute, but here are some examples of these biased and inaccurate research claims. So again, remembering all these examples of moral panics that have been very refuted, like comic books, that research concludes that comic books lead to antisocial behavior. That's not true. Now we know better.

So it's again, these moral panics lead to biased and inaccurate research claims. And we're going to dive into all of these headfirst and talk about every single one in depth and how people came to those conclusions, what the conclusion really is, all these things.

But here's some examples. So using the term addiction without having clinical studies to back that up. People use bad research practices, right? So lack of control groups is an example here. When saying that porn ruins marriages and citing studies on that, the studies are not comparing it to marriages where porn is used and people are okay. And so it's very biased with the groups that they're researching.

172. Healthy Sexuality Part 1: Using Sexuality For Good

Citing old refuted studies, just holding on to those old refuted ones that have been refuted over and over again. Inaccurate conclusions from neuroscience studies, we'll get into that. Inventing disorders and diseases without real evidence because there's panic around it and the porn is playing into it. So it must be the porn's fault.

And then portraying people who use porn as emotionally damaged people without any evidence. So those are some examples. Now, before we get into this, of course, there's genuine pain around pornography and a lot of it. There's relationship pain. There is self identity pain. There is feeling out of control pain. Oh, and the fear that comes with that, of feeling out of control.

There are victims of abusers who use pornography. And we're really sensitive to this and aware of this and I have people in my organization who are working with me and doing the research with me who have been victims of abusers who have used that pornography in really terrible ways. There's grief around feeling like porn controls your life. There's distress around all the moral incongruence. So I know this is bad and I'm doing it, and that's so distressing to me, right?

There's all that pain, and there are many myths about porn that are created by this porn panic, moral panic movement here. And that's what we're going to address.

Okay, so first a disclaimer and something we want to make sure we're really clear about. At the Center For Overcoming Pornography we do not use the term child porn. We use the term S.E.M., sexual exploitation material. So we define porn as explicit representations of sexual activity performed by consenting adults. This does not include explicit representations of anyone under the age of 18 who is unable to consent to sexual acts.

So as we were discussing porn, we want it to be clear that we are not discussing S.E.M., sexual exploitation material. And we do not ever condone illegal materials such as S.E.M. If you have come across S.E.M,

172. Healthy Sexuality Part 1: Using Sexuality For Good

and I think it's so powerful for us to not call it child pornography because it's not, it's sexual exploitation material.

So if you have come across that, we encourage you to report this material to the United States Justice Division for US residents, or your local criminal division for anyone outside of the US, okay?

Second, a key principle here, so we're looking at this like an iceberg. The pornography is not the problem. Now underneath, if we look at porn it's the top of the iceberg, and then underneath we're going to be looking at stuff like sexual shame, buffering, escaping emotion, willpower, repression, shame spirals that lead to bingeing, over desire, witching hours, loneliness, negative beliefs about yourself, fear, porn panic, self-hatred, lack of education, fear, stress around intimacy, right?

So it's really easy to blame the porn. And you're going to see a lot of these studies want to do that. They want to blame the porn. But what we really see underneath the surface is that porn is actually pretty neutral and we need to look at what's going on underneath to see what the real problem is, okay? So keep that in mind.

These issues exist, but we give the porn too much power. The porn is easy to blame. But when we blame the porn, it doesn't actually create real solutions. Okay.

Third, you can find all of the research sources in the downloads below. As we go through these slides, you'll see that I'll have it sourced by the last name and the date. And so you can just go look at the last name and the date, and then go in the document if you want to read through the actual sources. On our website, centerforovercomingpornography.com/research, you'll also see all of the links and sources. So you can go and look through those yourself if you'd like to.

But the research is pretty heavy and that's why I had to hire someone to come and look through it all and then show it to me and summarize it for me. And she went, oh my goodness, you guys, she went to town and found so many things and did hours and hours and hours of this. And so we have

172. Healthy Sexuality Part 1: Using Sexuality For Good

those sources for you if you want to go and do hours and hours of this. But also the purpose of this class is to kind of condense it and show you it in a really easy to digest way.

But you know, the research is pretty heavy and that's why I had to hire someone to come and look through it all and then, you know, show it to me and summarize it for me. And she went, Oh my goodness, you guys, she went to town and found so many things and did hours and hours and hours of this. And so we have those sources for you if you wanna go and do hours and hours of this. But also the purpose of this class is to kind of condense it and show you it in a really easy to digest way.

So one thing to understand about the research regarding pornography is that it is a bit mixed and it is a bit messy, and it's also pretty new. And so, you know, as we're filtering out through all of this and trying to make sense of all this mixed and messy research, what we've done to make sure we can get the best possible is, first, we've hired out real researchers because this is not my background. I didn't go to school for this. I've hired someone who this is they've done years years years of school around this and, are very capable and qualified to do this.

We've also used recent studies within the last 10 years, sometimes within the last 20 years. We don't go any earlier than 20 years. We've used peer reviewed empirical articles. So what that means is that there are articles that have been combed over by many other scholars looking for strengths and weaknesses, and usually being edited multiple times, have tons of eyes on it by people who, you know, it's their job to make sure the stuff that's put out is really accurate.

And then one last thing too that we recognize is that all research, even good research, has limitations and that's always typically acknowledged in articles. They do are some of those limitations. And, you know, there's a reason we're a results focused program too. Yeah, we're research based and we're also results focused. What that means is we're using the research to inform us, but we're really focused on what's gonna get you the

172. Healthy Sexuality Part 1: Using Sexuality For Good

best results in your life and what works not just from a research standpoint, but from a practical standpoint in individual lives.

Here's the feelings that I hope that this gives you. I hope this gives you freedom, relief, and feeling empowered, okay? If other feelings come up like distress or guilt and shame, please take note, breathe, and try to ground yourself. You can always use all the grounding tools we have here for you in the program. You can look through those, choose some of those, bring it to a coaching call, bring it to Ask A Coach.

We will help you work through any feelings of distress, guilt, and shame that come up as we're going through this. Remembering a lot of this anti-porn research has been really harmful. And so just offering yourself a lot of grace as you're trying to understand how you want to apply it, as you're trying to understand how you want to think about this, give yourself grace and let us help you, okay?

And I'm kind of repeating myself here, but I just want to make this really clear. The goal of giving you the research and education here is liberation. I want you to feel liberated. Healing that side of you that's been scared and shamed and harmed. And then third, empowerment. To be an empowered consumer, to be empowered to make decisions for your life that fit your sexual values without lies, fear, and shame tactics. This is a typo, it's supposed to say without lies, fear, and shame tactics.

Okay so let's hop into it, myths about porn. Number one, you need it more and more. It's like an addiction. Your need will get stronger and stronger. This is a typo. It's supposed to say without lies, fear, and shame tactics. Okay. So let's hop into it, myth about porn. Number 1, you need it more and more. It's like an addiction. Your need will get stronger and stronger. Now current research shows little to no evidence that this is true.

And yet you might have experienced something like this where it does feel like it's getting stronger and stronger and you're searching more intense things, is the terminology that I've heard around this. And so what this might be, right, again, because current research shows little empirical

172. Healthy Sexuality Part 1: Using Sexuality For Good

evidence that this isn't true. There's that there is not the correlation here. So what this might be in another way to frame this that might feel more true to you is this idea of novelty and that we all want novelty, especially in sexuality.

We want novelty. That's what makes sexuality exciting is different things, novel things. And so this is why your searches might become different. Some people would maybe describe the novelty and difference as more intense, but there's little no evidence that it's doing anything in your brain that is more intense like drugs, which is what it's often compared to.

So it's not that your brain needs more and more, it's that you're searching for more novel sexual experiences. And so if you find yourself searching for more and more and more porn or more and more novel experiences, first off, recognizing that the different types of pornography, if you're looking for different types, that does not necessarily mean more intense. It just might be different and more exciting because it's newer.

And again, if there is more and more, and you're searching more and more, let's get curious about it and try to see what the root is here. It could be more buffering, like more escaping negative emotion. It could be a lot of things, but the data does not show us that this is like addiction where your brain needs more and more of it.

Myths about pornography, pornography is addiction. Now, remember you get to use whatever labels you want, but I want to give you here the research, the education around this, okay? The DSM-5, which is the World Health Organization manual for professionals to understand and treat mental health disorders. It was created by the most prestigious body of psychiatrists in the world. The review process took over a decade and involved thousands of professionals. They sifted through decades of data, opinions, and clinical charts.

And here's the conclusion that they came to, that there is insufficient peer reviewed evidence to establish the diagnostic criteria and course

172. Healthy Sexuality Part 1: Using Sexuality For Good

descriptions needed to include sex addiction and porn addiction as actual disorders.

Here's what this means, porn addiction is not a classified disorder in the DSM-5 or the ICD-11. This does not mean that there is not a lot of pain around porn. This does not mean that there is no compulsive behavior. Yes, there is compulsive behavior. This does not mean that you're making your experience up or that it's not as intense as you're saying it is. It is as intense.

This does not mean that you have to drop the label "addicted" if it's working for you, right? We say use the label that works for you. This does not mean that there is something wrong with you for not being able to quit. As I'm sharing this, I want to make sure I validate your experience because it's very real.

So what this does mean is that there is a little to no evidence that addiction models for quitting pornography work in the long term, whereas mindfulness based programs have shown a lot of success. You can see all of that study around mindfulness based programs and what we're seeing here at centerforovercomingpornography.com/researchpage.

So there is little to no evidence that addiction models for quitting porn work in the long term. Whereas mindfulness based programs, what we're doing here, have shown a lot of success in the research field. What this also means is it's that it's not your fault that you haven't been able to quit.

If you have been using some of these addiction based models and they're not working, it's like you've been fixing the microwave with the manual for the fridge. It's not because you're not good enough or because you're dumb. It's that you might have the wrong instructions and directions for what you really need to quit this.

This also means that there's a lot of hope for you. There's a ton of hope for you. You don't have to be stuck in this forever. And it also means, you know, your experiences, your hopelessness, and your feelings of being out of control are very real and very valid. And our goal is to use some of these

172. Healthy Sexuality Part 1: Using Sexuality For Good

approaches that showed to have more success over the addiction based models.

Again, our stance, use labels to help you. If the label of “addiction” is helpful, use it. If it doesn't help you, if it just leads to you feeling powerless, like you'll never change, like you're broken, or if it just leads you to justifying it, well, “I'm addicted anyways, and I'm addicted and I'll always be. It's okay for me to look because I'm addicted.” Drop it. Right? You get to choose labels that help you. If the addiction label helps you use it. If it doesn't, drop it.

Okay, you podcast listeners, this is where we're going to stop for today. It's been a pretty long one. But we have many more myths to go through and we will talk about those next week. So we will see you next week. Thank you for being here. Come and join us in the program if you want some help and some coaching through all of this, sarabrewer.com/workwithus. We'll see you next time, bye bye.

I want to invite you to come and listen to my free class, How To Overcome Pornography For Good Without Using Willpower. We talk about how to stop giving in to urges without pure willpower or relying on phone filters so that you can actually stop wanting pornography.

We talk about how to stop giving up after a few weeks or months. And spoiler alert, the answer isn't have more willpower. And then lastly, we talk about how to make a life without porn easily sustainable and permanent.

If you're trying to quit porn, this class is a game changer. So you can go and sign up at Sarabrewer.com/masterclass, and it is totally free.